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From Mr. Plummer Johnston, Sprouston.—1st, specimen of Female Pintail Duck (*Anas acuta*); 2nd, Ditto, of Female Oyster-Catcher (*Hæmatopus Ostralegus*).

From Mr. John Rutherford, Kelso.—Specimen of Common Bunting (*Emberiza miliaria*).

From Mr. Wilkie of Ladythorne.—Twenty-two skins of foreign birds, of beautiful plumage.

From Mr. Murray, Corsbie.—White variety of Common Rook.

Other specimens of birds, &c. for preservation, were also received from Mr. Elliott Lockhart of Borthwickbrae, Mr. Wilkie of Ladythorne, Mr. D. M'Dougall, Cessford, &c. &c.

From Miss Makdougall, Makerstoun.—Specimens of a species of *Pinna* from Australia.

From Dr. William Scott, Milsington.—Various skins of birds, &c. from Hindostan.

The splendid contributions by Mr. Selby to the entomological collection of the Institution were also much admired, and warmly acknowledged by the Members present.

Dr. F. Douglas read to the Meeting a letter from Mr. Selby, containing the outline of a plan for sending abroad an experienced naturalist, with the view of making collections in the different departments of Natural History, to be afterwards transmitted to this country, and divided among a certain number of subscribers, who are to bear the expenses of the expedition; and requesting the Society to join as one of the partners in the undertaking. The Meeting felt compelled to decline this proposal, on the plea of its being attended with an expense too heavy for the present state of the Society's funds, which, besides, they considered as properly devoted to objects of a local nature merely; upon which, Sir Thomas Brisbane, with that zeal for science by which he has always been characterized, declared his wish to become a subscriber to the scheme in behalf of the Society, to the Museum of which he would cause to be handed over such objects as might be obtained. The Meeting acknowledged, in the warmest manner, this new proof of the liberality of their President; and Dr. F. Douglas was desired to communicate with Mr. Selby on the subject.

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which we consider as of great interest, both as showing that the inhabitants of that far distant part of the United Kingdom are determined not to be behind their more favoured countrymen of the south; and also as being the first instance that has come under our notice of a Society for the pursuit of science being so constituted as to admit to membership individuals belonging to the poorer classes of society. It will be seen by the laws of the Society, extracts from which we subjoin, that the annual subscription is fixed at the very small sum of *two shillings*, and yet the committee are able to state, at the end of the first year of the Society's existence, that "the funds, so far from being embarrassed, have more than met the numerous outlays."

Amongst the laws of the Society are the following :

"1. The Society shall be designated '*The Orkney Natural History Society*,' and shall have for its object the promoting of natural science by the support of a museum, and by any other means in its power.

"2. The property of the Society shall be inalienable.

"3. The ordinary Members of the Society shall pay the sum of two shillings sterling annually.

"4. The general meetings of the Society shall be held quarterly, viz. on the third Tuesday in January, April, July, and October, the chair to be taken at 1 o'clock, P.M.; and that of January to be the anniversary, when the office-bearers shall be elected.

"7. Gentlemen friendly to the institution may be elected Corresponding Members, and such as are eminent for science may be elected Honorary Members of the Society."

The objects that they have in view are stated in the first sentence of the report in the following terms:—"The Orkney Natural History Society was instituted for the twofold object of investigating the Natural History and Antiquities of the county, and of stimulating the inhabitants of these islands to the study of the Almighty's works;" and the progress which they have made in one year is stated as follows:—"In geology there are now in the museum above 500 specimens from Upper Canada, Norway, France, Italy, and the British Isles. The Orkney specimens include about 100 fossil fish. The specimens in mineralogy amount to 400. There are about 60 specimens of birds and 200 eggs. The collection of land plants already consists of upwards of 600 specimens, and the collection of Algæ, for obtaining which there is not a better place in Britain than these islands, is "truly excellent." The Society possesses several most ardent cultivators of marine botany, amongst whom may



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The Museum also contains about 100 species of shells, and numerous antiquarian and miscellaneous objects of interest. The number of ordinary members in January 1839 was 118.

We trust that such an instance of what may be done by enlisting the poorer classes of society in the support of institutions of this character will not be without its use, but that the inhabitants of the towns of England will do for their poorer neighbours that which has been already done with such distinguished success by the clergy and other influential persons in the distant and stormy Orcades.

We may add that the address of the Secretary of the Society is the Rev. W. Stobbs, Stromness, Orkney.

#### MICROSCOPICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

March 18, 1840.—Mr. Owen in the Chair.

A paper was read by Mr. Edwards "On the Structure and Affinities of the *Bacillariæ* of Ehrenberg." After commenting on the Polygastric characters of these animalcules, the indestructible nature of their siliceous coverings, and their mode of reproduction by spontaneous division, the author proceeded to discuss the merits of those views, which have claimed for the *Bacillariæ*, on the one hand a place in the vegetable, and on the other a position in the animal kingdom. The mixed nature of the phænomena exhibited by these animalcules, which has also led some naturalists to consider them as in one stage of their existence animals, and in another vegetables, furnish, according to the author, sufficient grounds for considering the *Bacillariæ* as an osculant group, uniting the two great kingdoms of nature. An interesting discussion followed on this subject, in which Dr. Lindley, Messrs. Quekett, Varley, the President, and other Members took a part.

#### ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

October 8, 1839.—The Rev. F. W. Hope in the Chair.

The following letter, addressed to the Chairman of the Scientific Committee by John Gould, Esq., Corresponding Member, was read; it is dated Van Diemen's Land, May 10th, 1839:—

"Although my present occupations will not permit me to send a

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